



UC-AFT **Local 1966** **UC-Riverside**

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PROP. 226: AN ATTACK ON THE FREEDOM OF UNIONS

BARBARA GABLE

On the June 2 ballot is an initiative which is alarming organized labor throughout the state of California. Proposition 226 would prevent unions from using dues money for political causes without written permission from members. This initiative, championed by Gov. Pete Wilson, is aimed especially at teachers' unions, which have fought against right-wing causes dear to the governor's heart, such as school vouchers, as well as opposing reactionary candidates.

None of the backers of Prop. 226 are disgruntled union members, tired of seeing their dues spent for political campaigns and lobbying, but are instead politicians and businessmen with their own agenda, many from out of state. These ideologues want to take away political power from people who as individuals, without the power they have delegated to their unions, have only the small voices of isolated voters. Its backers call Proposition 226 "paycheck protection" but "union assault" would be a more accurate name.

Workers form unions to increase their power because there is strength in numbers. A group can bargain for protections and improvements in its members' working lives, but its power must also extend beyond the walls of the workplace -- what happens in local, state, and national politics affects

workers in countless ways. A union is indeed a political organization, seeking ways to benefit its members and protect their jobs.

It is not coincidental that unions most often support Democrats since Republicans are so often anti-labor and anti-union. What looks like partisanship is really a practical decision to back those candidates who will support workers. The amount of money pooled from union dues and used to fight for candidates and propositions which will benefit workers may seem large, but it is tiny compared to the amounts contributed by corporations and wealthy individuals who support right-wing causes.

Continued on page 2

A CASE FOR CASE

Arlen Appleford

Several weeks ago members of CASE, which stands for Coalition of Allied Student Employees, spent a sunny windy, day grading their papers out by the belltower where everyone passing by could see them. They did this, they explained to anyone who asked, to focus attention on themselves as campus workers.

Since the TAs and tutors who make up CASE are in fact employed by the university, the gesture might have seemed irrelevant, except that the UCR administration has refused to recognize them for

Continued on page 2

PROP. 226

Continued from p. 1

Most union members realize and accept that some of their dues money will go toward political causes. Aside from some notorious exceptions, most unions are based on democratic principles and their leaders, most of whom at the local level are unpaid volunteers, listen to the members who elected them. Input from the rank and file is requested before donations or endorsements are given.

It's true that not every member will agree with every decision its leadership makes, but such dissension is to be expected in every democratic organization. Those who, through their purchases or their labor, made the corporations and individuals wealthy enough to support pro-business candidates did not have any choice in how the profits would be spent. If union members disagree strongly enough with the political stands of their leaders, they can drop their membership or arrange to pay only the costs of representation and bargaining. The UC-AFT has indeed had a few people who spoke their convictions in this way. On the other hand, many others have joined because they see the union as an effective mouthpiece for their own views and are proud to belong to an organization that looks out for not only the rights of individual employees and the enforcement of the contract but also tries to influence the larger economic and political forces affecting the society within whose context their jobs exist.

The State of California should not be given the right to dictate how organizations of employees choose to spend their money. To attempt to do so seems to be an infringement of unions' freedom of speech. Use of dues for political purposes is a matter for the unions themselves to regulate.

Prop. 226 is one of Gov. Wilson's continuing attempts to curry favor with right-wing Republicans. This time he hopes to become presidential material by suppressing the right of

unions to use small amounts of money from their members to enable many small voices to be heard in high places.

Join with other members of Local 1966 and the American Federation of Teachers to fight against Prop. 226. Preserve your right to be heard in Sacramento and in Washington. Prevent the state from telling your union how it can spend your dues. Vote NO on Prop. 226.

A CASE FOR CASE

Continued from p. 1

the workers they are. Chancellor Orbach has so far resisted a meeting with a delegation from CASE, arguing that they already have a mechanism for expression within the university, though this representative body does not negotiate wages or working conditions, which are the issues that matter to the TAs now. Precisely. For a number of reasons, the chancellor does not want to see these bright children of the university grow up. UC-AFT does.

In the first place, recognition of CASE would bring into campus unionization a large and relatively stable work population. Many TAs, for instance, are employed for a year at a time for up to five or six years. Just as their union membership would increase substantially the number of organized laborers on campus, so would it enlarge the number of longterm union employees at UCR. This in itself would be a great advantage to those of us in UC-AFT.

Librarians, though a very stable population, are also a small one; lecturers, though a larger one, are a notoriously unstable unit. Many are hired quarter-to-quarter, some for a year, and some, who are past the sixth-year review, for longer periods. Especially among those in the first category, union membership is rare, and understandably so; workers who are afraid of having no job in the very near future are unlikely to commit hardearned

dollars to an organization they may belong to for only ten weeks. Given these uncertainties of a large part of Unit 18 membership at UCR, the union will remain small, with a fluctuating membership. By increasing the number of union workers regularly employed, CASE, if successful, could strengthen the union position on campus. It would help raise the bottom line for us all.

This is true, even though CASE is affiliated with UAW, rather than AFT. In fact, the difference is of little or no consequence. Union workers always have more in common with one another than they do with non-union employees. The important thing is that they are organized. Common goals help them to achieve better working conditions for all workers. This is true because unions, rather than competing, actually cooperate with one another by forming coalitions, both locally and nationally.

The strength of such coalitions was illustrated dramatically last year, for instance, when unions belonging to AFL-CIO contributed funds to see the Teamsters through a potentially long strike against UPS. The overwhelming support of the coalition, which pledged ten million dollars a week if necessary, for as long as necessary, was a major reason for the UPS workers' success; in fact, it was shortly after Sweeney's announcement that management caved. The strike, they realized, could have gone on and on, while the company's losses mounted.

There is no such thing as a strong small union or even a large isolated one. A union's strength lies only in its numbers. Unions or the coalitions they form do not have access to corporate profits, or control of an institution's budget, which allows an administration, as at UC, to do pretty much as it likes. Unions have in fact only one strength: the combined force of their laborers. That is the negotiable tool, and unless it achieves a critical mass sufficient enough to create tension between itself and management, there can be no reforms. If we remember that, we will not hesitate to support CASE.

AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Your Local board members have been working diligently this year to protect the rights of unit members. A grievance is being pursued on the University's nasty habit of dropping people from union dues payroll deduction lists and another is in process on a denial of a renewal of a contract to a post-sixth year lecturer. In addition, we have helped solve several problems for unit members before they reached the grievance or lawsuit stage. As far as we know, reviews for three-year contracts are proceeding according to university timelines. At the moment, things are quiet in the library with no current grievances or major problems.

If you are experiencing any problems in your employment that you cannot solve through discussion with your supervisor, please contact one of your union officers as soon as possible. Even if the matter is not covered by the contract, we may be able to help or advise you. Come to us as soon as you realize that you may have a problem. Delay is fatal to the grievance process.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR MOU ARTICLE 13 -- LEAVES

Barbara Gable

Questions about the Leaves article in the Unit 18 MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) have come up several times recently. Looking at this rather vague article may help to clear up some misunderstandings. First of all, although some leaves of absence are possible, lecturers on nine-month appointments do not accrue vacation or sick leave. Sabbatical leaves do not exist for any lecturers. We are expected to be on the job from the

Continued on page 4

first day of the quarter until the last, with no time off.

But even lecturers get sick or pregnant, are called for jury duty, or are asked to present a paper at a conference. What then? The vagueness of the article does not prohibit any of these things but neither does it make it exactly clear what should happen. Article 13.A.1 states that lecturers "may apply for leaves . . . with and without pay." The university holds all the cards here and can decide what to do in each individual case, whether to grant the leave or not and whether it should be paid or not.

Notice that you are expected to "apply for" a leave. If you are anticipating a baby, surgery, or any other cause for an extended absence, see your department MSO as soon as possible to fill out the appropriate form.

We also, according to the 13.A.1, "agree to assist and consult with colleagues who, with the approval of the department chair, are able and willing to carry on the duties which the faculty/instructor in the unit is unable to perform while on leave." In other words, we are expected to find our own substitutes from among our colleagues, which may or may not be possible with three classes to cover.

Appendix D of the MOU lists a number of leaves which lecturers are eligible to apply for, including the federal family medical leave. Leaves can be requested with or without pay for personal emergencies, childbirth or adoption, illness, jury duty, professional meetings, military and governmental service. Some of these leaves are described in the Academic Personnel Manual (APM). See your department MSO for more information. Maternity leave, for example, is granted with pay for up to twelve weeks, part of which may require "modified duties."

Suppose you become too ill to teach your classes or are injured in an accident, a constant worry for employees without sick leave. Lecturers with full-year contracts have university-paid

disability insurance but it pays very little. Let's hope that you have signed up for employee-paid disability insurance, available with seven-day and thirty-day waiting periods. See your benefits counselor for more information. If you do not have such insurance, you can't expect much help from the university. We know of lecturers who were threatened with being fired because they got sick. If colleagues had not volunteered to teach their classes without pay, no doubt the university would have made good on its threat.

Usually leaves are granted without much question for short periods so that you may attend professional meetings, at your own expense, of course. Just be sure to notify your department chair in writing of the dates you will be away from campus and make arrangements for covering or making up the classes you miss. As far as jury duty goes, it's probably easiest to defer it until summer. Leave for jury duty is paid, although a colleague who substitutes for you will not get any extra pay.

Let's say you decide you want to try another career, take some specialized training in something really interesting, or even bum around South America for a quarter, for professional development, of course. The sections in Article 13 on other leaves with pay and without pay open possibilities of taking leaves of up to one year, most certainly without pay. Notice, however, that leaves can be granted with pay "for good cause." At UC Davis a few lecturers have been granted quarter-long professional development leaves with pay, the equivalent of a sabbatical leave, but this practice is unheard of elsewhere in the system.

What happens to your benefits while you are on leave without pay? They will stop, of course, unless you decide to pay for them yourself. See your departmental benefits advisor or make an appointment with someone in the Benefits office to find out exactly what you need to do to continue your benefits. If you are a member of the university retirement system, you can buy back retirement

credit for the period you were gone. Again someone from the Benefits office can advise if such a buy-back makes sense for you.

For quarter-long leaves, the clock in the review process keeps on ticking for lecturers on post-six year appointments, but for year-long leaves, the clock can be stopped on request. Lecturers who have not yet gone through the sixth-year review may ask that quarter-long leaves taken for any reason also stop the review clock.

No leave can extend beyond the end of your current appointment. When you return, your duties are not to be "unreasonably modified." In other words, there should be no penalties for taking a leave.

Article 13 -- Leaves -- is vague on purpose. Most decisions are left up to the university. If you need a leave, it is possible to get one, although you might not be paid. Be sure to let your department know your plans, fill out the proper forms, and make arrangements for benefits. Send us a postcard from South America!

IT'S NOT NECESSARILY YOUR JOB

Each year the Slateboard reminds lecturers on one-year or quarterly appointments to reapply for their jobs. Do not assume that you will be considered for your position if you do not reapply for it, even if the department has made no search for other candidates and seems pleased with you. There are unfortunately no guarantees of continuity of employment before the sixth year of service, but you can at least insure that your department considers you if you reapply for your position. Contact a Local officer if you have any questions about your situation.

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ABOUT THE SLATEBOARD

This newsletter is funded by Local 1966 of the University Council-American Federation of Teachers. It appears quarterly and is distributed to all teaching faculty, librarians, and union local presidents on the UCR campus. The editors will print articles on labor relations and other matters of interest to these groups.

The editorial board is made up of members of Local 1966. Opinions are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the editorial board. We encourage submissions of articles and letters from other members of the campus community. Bring items to the editor, Barbara Gable, English.

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